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Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

AID-05 PC-01 PER-01 SY-04 SCS-03 /070 W
---------- 018359
R 210700Z FEB 75
FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6944
USIA WASHDC
INFO AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 235

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, DM, US, FR
SUBJ: KEREKOU CONVOKES "ANTI-REVOLUTIONARIES"

SUMMARY: 38 PEOPLE WERE CONVOKED TO THE PRESIDENCY FEB 20 AND THE 16 WHO SHOWED UP WERE BERATED BY PAS KEREKOU FOR BEING INFORMER FOR THE FRENCH, AMERICAN AND OTHER EMBASSIES. TWO USIS LOCALS WERE AMONG THE GROUP WHO WERE TOLD THAT THERE WAS NO BUSINESS OR PROFESSIONAL JUSTIFICATION FOR THEIR HAVING CONTACT WITH FOREIGN MISSIONS. USING THIS LAST STATEMENT AS BASIS, EMBASSY PROTESTED TO FOREIGN MINISTRY THE PRESENCE OF

USIS LOCAL EMPLOYEES ON LIST.

1. FEB 19-20 RADIO DAHOMEY'S "VOICE OF THE REVOLUTION" BROADCAST ON THREE SEPARATE OCCASIONS A COMMUNIQUE SUMMONING 38 DAHOMEANS TO APPEAR AT THE PRESIDENCY AT 1000 21 FEB. AMONG NAMES WERE USIS COTONOU CONTACTS AT THE RADIO AND THE UNIV OF DAHOMEY, THE TOP TWO USIS LOCAL EMPLOYEES, A MINISTRY OF FINANCE OFFICIAL WHOSE WIFE IS A PART TIME EMPLOYEE OF THE PEACE CORPS IN COTONOU, THE RECENTLY ARRIVED AMERICAN DIR OF AID-SUPPORTED MATERNAL-CHILD HEALTH PROGRAM, A YOUNG MAN WHO GAVE TENNIS LESSONS TO SOME OF THE EMBASSY STAFF, AND
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AN ARCHITECT WHO IS HELPING DRAW UP PLANS FOR THE RENOVATION OF

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THE EMBASSY. ACCORDING TO THE USIS LOCALS, PRES KEREKOU KEPT EVERYONE WAITING FOR TWO HOURS. WHEN HE FINALLY ENTERED, HE TOLD THEM THEY WERE ALL KNOWN TO BE INFORMERS AND TALE-BEARERS, REPORTING TO FOREIGN MISSIONS "SUCH AS THE FRENCH EMBASSY, THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES, AND OTHERS" ALL THAT WAS HAPPENING IN DAHOMEY. KEREKOU THEN TOLD THEM THEIR NAMES WOULD BE PUBLISHED IN THE NEXT EDITION OF THE OFFICIAL DAILY DAHO EXPRESS. MIDDAY NEWSCAST 20 FEB CARRIED RESUME OF CONVOCATION, WITH STATEMENT THAT THESE AGENTS' CONTACTS WITH FOREIGN MISSIONS HAD NO BUSINESS OR PROFESSIONAL JUSTI-FICATION.

2. AFTER CONSULTATION WITH COUNTRY TEAM, DCM MADE DEMARCH WITH MIN OF FORNAFFAIRS, PROTESTING THIS TREATMENT OF MISSION LOCALS, POINTING OUT ABSURDITY OF HAVING EMPLOYEES WHO COULD NOT EVEN COME TO PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT WITHOUT BEING ACCUSED OF DISLOYALTY. (EMBASSY LEARNED PRESENCE OF US CITIZEN'S NAME ON LIST ONLY AFTER DEMARCH MADE) DCM IDENTIFIED USIS LOCALS FOR FORNMIN OFFICIAL, WHO THEN OFFERED TO SEE WHAT COULD BE DONE TO CLEAR THEIR NAMES.

3. FEB 21 EDITION DAHO EXPRESS DEVOTED TWO THIRDS OF PAGE ONE TO THIS AFFIAR, BUT DID NOT MENTION SPECPRC NAMES EMBASSY RELIABLY INFORMED LIST WITHHELD DUE PRESENCE OF USIS LOCALS NAMES ON IT.) ARTICLE REPORTED PRES KEREKOU LAID THE LAW DOWN "TO MORE THAN 30 NOTORIOUS ANTI-REVOLUTIONARIES, TO NOTE WELL FOR THEMSELVES, THEIR FRIENDS, AND ALL OTHERS." ARTICLE WENT ON TO STATE THAT "THESE MEN AND WOMEN ARE GUILTY OF COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY SCHEMINGS, GOSSIP, OVERTURES BEHAVIOR, RELATIONS WHOSE BASENESS IS REVOLTING TO THE NATIONAL CONSCIENCE...THESEHJEN AND WOMEN...FREQUENT EMBASSIES WHOSE DEALINGS ARE OBVIOUSLY INIMICAL TO GOOD RELATIONS, FRIENDSHIP, INTERNATIONAL LAW, AND PEACE. THESE ANTI-NATIONALS WILL INFORM FOREIGNERS OF EVERYTHING THAT GOES ON HERE, THEY WILL RECEIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR SELLING OUR COUNTRY FOR THE PALTRY CRUMBS THROWN TO THEM, AS TO MISERABLE BEGGARS."

"LET IT BE NOTED WELL: THE MILITANT PEOPLE OF DAHOMEY WILL NOT LONG ALLOW THE UNWORTHY SONS OF THIS COUNTRY TO DISHONOR CONFIDENTIAL

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IT IN ANY FORM WHATSOEVER BY PROSTITUTING THEMSELVES WITH OUTSIDERS. THE MILITANT PEOPLE OF DAHOMEY WILL STRIKE HARD, AND WITHOUT MERCY, ALL NATIIONALS AS WELL AS OUTSIDERS -- WHO THREATN OUR DIGNITY..LET THE EMBASSIES ALSO NOTE THIS WELL."

4. COMMENT: KEREKOU'S BEHAVIOR RECENTLY HAS TAKEN ON MORE AND MORE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A JEAN BODEL BOKASSA, IF

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NOT IDI AMIN HIMSELF. (WHETHER FROM PARANOIA, OR FROM
GENUINE CAUSE, HE IS REPORTED TO HAVE HAD THE HEDGES CUT
AWAY FROM AROUND HIS HOUSE TO PREVENT ANY WOULD BE ASSASSINS
FROM HIDING BEHIND THEM.) IF REPORTS OF KEREKOU'S IMMINENT FALL
FROM POWER ARE CORRENT, HE MAY HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTING TO CREATE
A DIVERSION WHICH WOULD GIVE HIM TIME TO REDRESS HIS
POSITION. THE TWO USIS LOCALS FEARED PHYSICAL REPRISALS BY
OVERZEALOUS REVOLUTIONARIES. SEVERAL OF THE NAMES ON THE LIST
WERE MUSLIM BUSINESSMEN FROM PORT-NOVO. IT IS WIDELY KNOWN
IN THE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY, THE NIGERIAN EMBASSY HAS DEALINGS
WITH THAT GROUP. HOWEVER, KEREKOU CHOSE ONLY TO MENTION THE FRENCH
AND AMERICAN EMBASSIES BY NAME.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ALLEGATIONS, ESPIONAGE AGENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975COTONO00235
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750064-0345
From: COTONOU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750225/aaaaavpy.tel
Line Count: 128
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 MAY 2003 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <21 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

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Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KEREKOU CONVOKES "ANTI-REVOLUTIONARIES" SUMMARY: 38 PEOPLE WERE CONVOKED TO THE PRESIDENCY FEB 20
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, DM, US, FR, (KEREKOU, MATHIEU)
To: STATE USIA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006